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they are come; till at length, on a penitent's turning from the grate, one tall woman, bolder than a score of men, darts forward, from a distance, into the place he has vacated, to the disappointment of the many who have waited longer than she. You almost groan under the weight of your imagination, that a soul so selfish, so uncollected, must surely be in very ill disposition for so awful a sacrament; you look at the priest, and he has on his face a look almost of impatience, or of good-natured compassion at the voluble and superfluous matter which is the staple of her confession. The priests, you think, are no better than the people. My dear brother, do not be so uncharitable and unphilosophical. Things we thoroughly believe we treat as things which occur every day, whether they be of this world or of the next. Impatience and rudeness are faulty, no doubt; yet they do not prove the absence of faith, nor yet of love, or of contrition. Well, you turn away, half satisfied, and what do you see? There is a feeble old woman, who first genuflects before the Blessed Sacrament, and then steals her neighbour's handkerchief or prayerbook, who is intent upon his devotion. You are shocked, yet what does this prove? Faith does not force obedience. She worships, and she sins; she kneels, because she believes; she steals, because she does not love; she may be out of God's grace, but she is not altogether out of his sight.

"You come out again, and mix in the idle and dissipated throng, and you fall in with a man in a palmer's dress selling false relics, and a credulous circle of customers buying them as greedily as though they were the supposed French laces and India silks of a pedlar's basket; one simple soul has bought of him a cure for the rheumatism or ague, which might form a case of conscience. It is said to be a relic of St. Cuthbert, but only has virtue at sunrise, and when applied, with three crosses, to the head, arms, and feet. You pass on, and encounter a rude son of the Church, more like a showman than a religious, recounting to the gaping multitude some tale or vision of the invisible world, seen by brother Augustine of the Friar Minors, or by a holy Jesuit preacher, who died in the odour of sanctity, and sending round his bag to collect pence for the souls in purgatory; and of some appearance of our Lady (the like of which has never been before or since), but on no authority except popular report, and in no shape but that which popular caprice has given it. You go forward, and you find preparations proceeding for a great pageant or mystery; it is a high festival, and the incorporated trades have each undertaken their special religious celebration: the plumbers and glaziers are to play the Creation; the barbers the Call of Abraham; and at night is to be the grandest performance of all—the Resurrection and Last Judgment, played by the carpenters, masons, and blacksmiths: heaven and hell are represented—saints, devils, and living men; and the *chef d'œuvre* of the exhibition is the display of fireworks to be let off as the *finale*. 'How unutterably profane,' again you cry. Yes, profane to you, my dear brother—profane to a population which only half believes—not profane to those who believe wholly. They gaze, and in drinking in the exhibition with their eyes, they are making one continuous and intense act of faith.

"You turn to go home, and in going you pass through a retired quarter of the city. Look up at those sacred windows: they belong to the convent of the Perpetual Adoration, or to the poor Clares, or to the nuns of the Visitation. Seclusion, silence, watching, adoration, is their life day and night. Where will you find such a realised heaven upon earth? Yet that very sight has acted otherwise on the mind of a weak sister, and the very keenness of her faith, and wild desire of approaching the object of it, has led her to fancy, or to feign, that she has received that singular favour vouchsafed only to a few elect souls; and she points to God's wounds as imprinted on her hands, and feet, and side, though she herself has been instrumental in their fabrication.

"And now, as you have listened to me so patiently, I have only to say, in conclusion, what a merciful providence it is that faith and love are thus separable, as the Catholic creed teaches. If sin not only threw the soul out of God's favour, but at once emptied it of every supernatural principle, we should see in Catholics, what is so common in Protestants, souls brought back to a sense of guilt—frightened at their state, yet having no resource, and nothing to build upon. When the poor Protestant is overcome by sin, his doctrinal views vanish, he adds sin to sin, and his best aspirations come to nothing. But the Catholic knows just where he is, and what he is to do; no time is lost when compunction comes upon him, but while his feelings are fresh and keen he can betake himself to the appointed means of cure. Thus he may be ever falling; but yet he wipes off his guilt again and again; and even if his repentance does not endure, and if he has not strength to persevere, he is never getting worse, but ever beginning afresh.

"But, above all, let death come suddenly upon him, and let him have the preparation of one poor hour, and what is the Protestant to do? I am not speaking of the more serious part of the community, but of a man taken at random in one of our vast towns. The minutes hasten on, and, having to learn every thing (supposing him desirous of learning), he can practise nothing. His thoughts rise up in some vague desire of peace, which he is unable to analyze. He asks for some *prayer* in the Bible to be read to him, but rather as the expression of his horror and bewilderment, than as the *source* of his faith; and then his intellect

becomes clouded, and he dies. How different is it with the Catholic! He has within him almost a principle of recovery, certainly an instrument of it. He may have spoken lightly of the Almighty, but he has ever believed in him; he has sung jocose songs about the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and told good stories about the evil spirit—but in levity, not in contempt; he has been angry with his heavenly patrons when things went ill with him, but with the waywardness of a child who is cross with his parents. He has absented himself from his Easter duties, years out of number, but he never denied he was a Catholic. He has laughed at priests, and slandered them to others, but not as doubting the divinity of their function, and the virtue of their ministrations. He has attended mass carelessly and heartlessly, but he was ever aware what was there before his eyes, under the veil of material symbols. So, when the news come to him that he is to die, and he cannot get a priest, and the ray of God's grace pierces his heart, his thoughts at once take shape and order, and he knows precisely what to do. He addresses himself to his crucifix; he interests the Blessed Virgin in his behalf; he betakes himself to his patron saints; he calls his good angel to his side; he professes his desire of that sacramental absolution which, from circumstances, he cannot obtain; he exercises himself in acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, resignation, and other virtues suitable to his extremity. The enemy rushes on him to overthrow the faith on which he is built; but the whole tenor of his past life, his very jesting and his very oaths have been overruled to create in him a habit of faith, girding round and protecting the supernatural principle. And thus, even one who has been a bad Catholic may have hope in his death, to which the most virtuous of Protestants—nay, dear sir, the most correct and most thoughtful in your communion, however able, or learned, or sagacious, if he have lived not by faith, but by private judgment, are necessarily strangers."

There was a pause when Mr. Oldham had concluded, and then Mr. Graham replied, "I did, indeed, do you an injustice when I thought that you had not observed the working of Romanism on the continent. You have described it more graphically than I could have done—more so than, perhaps, the fear of giving offence, or of meeting denial would have permitted me to do, even had I been able; but when I have acknowledged the fidelity and liveliness of your descriptions, my praise ceases, and I must, in candour, express my utter disappointment at the ill success of the defence you have made for your system; it was, in short, no defence, but a confession and an adoption of the worst enormities that have been imputed to it."

"What was the difficulty you professed to answer? I endeavoured to apply to your Church's doctrine our Lord's test—'By their fruits you shall know them,' and I complained that the religion taught by your Church, even when practised most scrupulously, did not tend to produce holiness of life. You reply by admitting the fact most fully, and defending it. You assert that faith does not necessarily imply obedience; nay, that it ordinarily is separate from it in fact. All the glorious things that the Scripture says of faith you apply to the faith of devils, who believe and tremble; whose knowledge is accompanied by no love, and elicits no obedience. You boast of the universality of faith in these countries: I have not seen it. I have seen much credulity and much scepticism, but little faith. By faith I understand (and I use no novel language) not bare historical belief, such as may exist in the ungodly; but the habitual raising the mind above the things of sense, the habitual looking unto God, and trusting in him through Christ—a grace which differs only from obedience as the spring differs from the stream which issues from it. There is nothing of which I am more certain than that if the faith of your Church is one which has no tendency to produce works, the faith of your Church is not the faith of the Gospel."

"What was the description you gave me of the repentance taught by your Church? Which will enable a man to live in constant sin, without being injured by it—though ever falling, to wipe off his guilt again and again, and so never to get worse, but to be always beginning afresh. Is such language as this intended to remove or to confirm the prejudice I had entertained, that whatever be the theory of your penance and absolution, the practice is that the sinner is hardened by hopes of impunity, believing that he has the power, at any moment, to wipe off the old score of sin, and to be at liberty to begin a new one."

"But all you said before was brought to a climax by the contrast with which you concluded. As you spoke I shuddered to hear, as it were, a revelation of the very mystery of iniquity—a systematic plan for enabling men to secure the rewards of the service of God, while they employ their lives in the service of the devil. You complained of our Church, because she did not provide any means by which one of her members, after a life spent in wickedness and forgetfulness of God, might find a peaceful and happy death-bed, and die the death of the righteous, without having lived the life of the righteous. And you triumphed in contrasting the ease with which a 'bad Catholic' could, on his death-bed, find in his jests and his oaths his best safeguard, and by calling the Virgin, and the saints, and his good angel to his side, open to

himself an assured prospect of heaven. Is this a scheme to have emanated from a God of infinite holiness and purity? Or did you think to terrify me by telling me that the prospect of heaven which may be enjoyed by such a man as you have described is denied to me and the most virtuous in my communion? I fear not your threats, for I hear from your lips not the language of the prophets of God, but the very characteristic abominations of the false prophets of old—'With lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom God hath not made sad, and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his evil way, by promising him life.'" (Ezek. xiii. 22.)

Mr. Oldham was about to reply, but just then the bells of the neighbouring church rung out, at which he started, and saying it was his hour of prayer, took a hasty leave. When he was gone, Mr. Graham involuntarily exclaimed—"Is it possible that he really believes in the set of opinions he professes! With what unctious he described the practical working of your religion in the countries where it has had opportunity to develop itself! and what a miserable failure was his attempt to reconcile this with your Church's claim to sanctity! Is it possible that he could not know how much more mischief he was doing his cause by his vivid pictures of its difficulties, than good by his efforts to explain them. I fear you and your friends must regard him as one of the unruly elephants in the battles of old, which, in their ponderous flight, trampled down in all directions the forces they were brought up to support. And yet, perhaps, after all, he is scarcely to be blamed, for though the defence he offered is a failure, what better is to be had?"

Frank was silent, for he, too, while Mr. Oldham was speaking, could not help recalling to his mind some of the suspicions which Cornwall had formerly suggested. Nor had Mr. Oldham any immediate opportunity of explaining himself to them, for they did not meet again during the brief remaining period of Frank's stay in Rome. But the account of Frank's return to England must be reserved for another occasion.

TALK OF THE ROAD—No. XXI.

WELL, Jem," said Pat, "I had a talk with a neighbour, and I want to tell it to you."

"Well, Pat, let us hear it," said Jem.

"Well, Jem," said Pat, "it was with Neddy Boylan, about the Readers and the Bible; and Neddy allowed it was just folly for the people to be listening to them at all; for sure, says he 'Aren't we better as we are?' Well, with that I asked him was the Bible the Word of God at all? And he allowed there was no saying again that. And then I asked him wouldn't the religion that agreed with the Word of God be better than the religion that was against it. Well, he allowed that, too; 'and now,' says I 'what way have you for knowing that the priest's religion is better, by the Word of God, than the parson's?' Sure the priest won't let you look into the Bible to see if his religion is in it; and doesn't the parson offer to show you his in the Bible; and doesn't that itself look as if the parson had the best of it by the Bible?' 'Well,' says he, 'Maybe it does for that matter, but I don't want to know nothing at all about it; sure ain't I better as I am?' says he. 'Arrah man,' says I, 'do you mean to tell me that it is better not to know which religion is true than to know it?' 'Well,' says he, 'if I don't know it, isn't it the priest's look out,' says he; 'and if I did know it, wouldn't it be my own look out,' says he; 'and so ain't I better as I am,' says he, 'knowing nothing about it at all?' 'And do you mean to tell me,' says I, 'that if your religion is not the right way of salvation, that it's the priest will be damned instead of you, and you get salvation without being in the right way for it?' 'And do you mean to tell me,' says he, 'that God will lay all the blame on me that knows nothing at all about it myself, and only just does what the priest bids me, that ought to know better nor ever I can know?' And, says he, 'don't you mind Pat Brady that has the son that's a dummy, and innocent, and didn't Pat teach the creature to steal praties? and when them both was up afore the bench for it, didn't the magistrates say they wouldn't punish the dummy creature at all, cause he didn't know nothing at all; and they laid all the punishment on the man that taught him, and he knowing nothing himself, the creature, and do you mean to tell me,' says he, 'that the merciful God will be harder on the poor creatures that knows nothing, and only does as they are bid, than the magistrates was?' Sure I won't believe that at all,' says he. 'Well,' says I, 'Neddy (when I considered a bit), it doesn't seem to me to be like that at all. Sure the dummy couldn't know the differ of what was right and wrong; and sure its you that won't know it, Neddy,' says I; 'and sure that's not the same at all; and sure, Neddy,' says I, 'if you was to go and be a dummy on purpose, and to try to make your own self a fool, the way you could steal praties, sure the magistrates wouldn't let you off for THAT, Neddy? I'm thinking it's the worse they'd give it to you, if they knew that you wouldn't know the differ of right and wrong, Neddy,' says I. 'And how would I know the differ if there's no one to teach me,' says he; 'and sure isn't it a Souper I'd be called if I would ask the priest to teach me out of the Bible?' says he. 'Well, sure enough, it was that way long enough,' says I; 'but it isn't that way now; for sure there's Mr. Owens, and there's the readers that's come, all

* It may be proper to explain that by an act of faith, &c., is meant the repetition of a certain form of words.

willing and ready to show us that their religion is in the Bible; and now, if the priest will just do the same, sure then we can see for ourselves what religion is in the Word of God.' 'Well, that's just it,' says he, 'and that's just the reason why I wish the readers was hunted out of the country,' says he. 'And how would you know then,' says I, 'which religion is true?' 'And isn't that just what I don't want to know?' says he. 'Sure,' says he, 'before the readers came, weren't we just as safe as the dummy, not knowing nothing, and not having no way of knowing nothing, and weren't we quite quiet and easy; and now,' says he, 'every time the readers pass my door, don't I feel that they are just putting it on myself to know what religion is right, and just leaving me with no excuse for putting it all on the priest; and now,' says he, 'weren't we better as we were? and why would the readers be coming here to put it all on ourselves, when it wasn't on ourselves before?' 'Well, Neddy,' says I, 'by that way of reckoning, wouldn't it be the fine thing if Jesus Christ had never come into the world at all to show us the way of salvation?' 'And how's that?' says he, 'sure I didn't go for to say the like of that at all?' 'Well,' says I, 'sure we could all say then that we knew nothing at all about what religion was true, and that we hadn't no way to know; and sure we could put it all on Adam, that sinned; and on God, too, that let us be born in sin, and gave us no knowledge; and sure if it's a fine thing to know nothing,' says I, 'wouldn't that be the way we would know nothing at all; and wouldn't it be the finest of all?' 'Well, I didn't mean that,' says he; 'but sure the readers is putting it on me to know for myself, and sure it wasn't put on me before?' 'And didn't Jesus Christ, when he came into the world, put it on people to know him, and to judge for themselves that it was him? and didn't he put it on them to know if his religion was true? and didn't he put it on them to search the Scriptures to find out if it was Him that was in it? and didn't he put it on them to repent, and to turn to Him, and to believe in Him? and why wouldn't the Word of God do just the same now,' says I 'when it comes to our own doors?' So I seen he was studying, and he couldn't get over that; 'so,' says I to him, 'Neddy,' says I, 'just tell me, was it worse for the people then, for Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, to come to them?' 'Well,' says he, 'I don't know what to say to it, and I would like for somebody to tell me.' 'Well,' says I, 'I think it was better for them that would hear and learn from him, for sure they found salvation,' says I; 'and I'm thinking,' says I, 'it was worse for them that wouldn't learn, for sure then they had no excuse,' says I; 'and with that I just got out my Bible before he could stop me, and I showed him what Jesus Christ said himself—“This is the judgment, because the Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light” (John, iii. 19, Douay Bible). ‘And is it that way with the readers?’ says he. ‘Well, it was that way with the apostles,’ says I, ‘for here is what St. Paul says of himself and the rest of them,—“We are the good odour of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one indeed we are the odour of death unto death, but to the others the odour of life unto life” (2 Cor. ii. 15 and 16). ‘And is it that way with the readers?’ says he. ‘It’s that way,’ says I, ‘with the word that Jesus Christ spoke, and that’s in the Bible; so I’m thinking,’ says I, ‘it’s always that way with them that offers to show us the Word of God.’ ‘Well that’s just what was angering me against the readers,’ says he. ‘Take care that same wouldn’t anger you against the Word of God,’ says I. ‘I doubt it would,’ says he, ‘if I gave in to it any more.’ ‘Well don’t,’ says I; ‘sure it’s come to your door now, and you can’t put it away if you would; just turn to it,’ says I, ‘and see if it isn’t for life and salvation to them that receives it.’ ‘That’s what I’ll have to do,’ says he, ‘and I knew myself it would come to that,’ says he, ‘cause I was so angry at it; so there’s my story, Jem.’

“And a good story, too, Pat,” said Jem; “you handled it well; and I believe there’s a deal of people in the country that has got that notion; they feel the readers is putting it on themselves to know what religion is true, and they don’t feel yet that it is the knowledge of the way of salvation that the readers is putting on them. But I suppose, Pat, it be to be that way at first; and sure it’s something when the people begins to feel that itself; for sure when that begins to work in them a bit, they won’t be able to turn it off. But did you ask the man behind the door, Pat, about what the Rev. Mr. Burke said of the wine that wasn’t made of ripe grapes? and what did you get out of him?”

“Oh, just not one word,” said Pat. “I knew he was there, and I shouted it to him, and he heard it all and wouldn’t say one word, good nor bad.”

“Well, that’s enough, Pat,” said Jem; “Mr. Burke is right this time, anyway.”

So they went home for that night, and, no doubt, will be talking again.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The great mass of communications with which we are favoured renders it impossible for us to insert everything we could desire as promptly as we could wish. At this moment several articles, actually in type, are necessarily omitted for want of room, though we have incurred considerable expense in giving four extra pages in our present number.

We are reluctantly obliged to postpone Mr. Rourke’s letter, though already in type, on account of its great length, but hope to insert it in our next. To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. We would request our correspondents, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, to limit the length of their communications, and not to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND FRIENDS.

We have to thank several obliging friends for assisting us with copies of Nos. 2, 8, and 11, to complete sets of Vol. I., which is in great demand. Nos. 3 and 4 have already been reprinted. If any of our friends could oblige us with additional copies of Nos. 2, 8, or 11, they would be very acceptable, and might save us the heavy expense of reprinting them, which, however, we purpose doing, if necessary.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, FEBRUARY, 1854.

Our readers may, perhaps, recollect our noticing, in October last, a notable expedient for putting down our somewhat troublesome periodical, suggested by a provincial journal, whose editor appears to be more remarkable for irritability than ingenuity—viz., the summary one of knocking down the first man that put into his hand this “vile periodical”—as being “a deliberate insult and provocation quite sufficient to justify a man in committing a breach of the peace!”

We ventured on that occasion to express our conviction that this summary method of extinguishing our journal was rather unfair to that useful class of our fellow-subjects, the letter-carriers of her Majesty’s Post-office, and was, we thought, not very likely to be brought into active operation, much less before the judicial bench at petty sessions or elsewhere—and as we have not yet learned that any of our very useful friends, the postmen, have suffered in the cause, we presume that our editorial opponent’s advice has not yet been taken, even at Limerick, as far, at least, as the CATHOLIC LAYMAN is concerned.

It appears, however, that in the same month of October, a certain Mr. Martin Andrew O’Brien, who describes himself as proprietor of the collegiate seminary, Bolton-street, in the city of Dublin (instigated probably by the advice of our Limerick cotemporary, then just published), determined to try the point of law as to what would amount to “a justification for committing a breach of the peace” in such matters; and having been handed by one Wm. Smyth, handbill distributor, in Lower Sackville-street, on the evening of the 14th of October, a certain printed paper, inviting him to attend a controversial sermon in St. Luke’s Church, on Sunday evening, the 16th of October, on the subject of “The Supremacy of St. Peter,” he was afforded a fitting opportunity; whereupon, quoth Mr. O’Brien (we quote from his own affidavit made in the course of the proceedings, after mentioned), “on ascertaining the nature of the handbill, and taking into consideration what deponent regarded as the premeditated insolence of the prosecutor (said Smyth), in his manner and gesture, when thrusting said bill into his hand, defendant was very indignant, and his first impulse was (follow-

ing, of course, the advice of our pugilistic friend), to have struck the prosecutor; but on a moment’s consideration, he thought it more becoming to have the prosecutor given in charge for his misconduct, which evidently and manifestly tended, in defendant’s opinion, to provoke a breach of the peace.” Thereupon he, Mr. O’Brien, handed over the culprit, Smyth, into the custody of a policeman, and had him carried off to the Capel-street Police-office, where he swore informations against him, before Mr. Hugh O’Callaghan, one of the metropolitan divisional police magistrates, who, without hesitation, agreeing, of course, in his view of the law with our Limerick cotemporary, bound over poor Smyth in heavy recognizances to keep the peace, or to submit to imprisonment for fourteen days!

Great was the joy, of course, of our pugilistic friend, who deemed this one step at least gained in carrying out his plan of knock-down arguments, the point of law being now satisfactorily decided, and the courage to carry it out, whether against bill-stickers, CATHOLIC LAYMEN, or letter-carriers, being all that was now required to put an end to the nuisance of free discussion upon such offensive and dangerous topics as are treated of in our pages.

Great, also, was the laudation bestowed on the legal acumen and impartiality of Mr. O’Callaghan, who was forthwith held up as an example worthy of imitation by all her Majesty’s justices of the peace throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, some of whom might, perhaps, require enlightenment, as not happening to possess the experience or legal ability of the said Mr. O’Callaghan.

Having ourselves been not a little amused at the whole matter, we took the trouble to cut out a number of articles from certain public papers of that date, which joined in chorus to give Mr. O’Callaghan a regular ovation; and we now present our readers with a few extracts, out of many:—

(From the Nation.)

“Two or three days ago a tract distributor, employed by a controversial minister in St. Michael’s parish, while practising his profession in Sackville-street, thrust one of his anti-Papal documents into the hands of our Catholic fellow-citizen, Mr. M. A. O’Brien. Anxious to test the legality of such an offensive proceeding, Mr. O’Brien had his assailant arrested forthwith, and brought before a police magistrate; and the magistrate decided that the prisoner should be bound over in heavy recognizances to preserve the peace, or submit to an imprisonment of fourteen days. A simple and effective remedy has thus been found for the entire system of modern missionary tactics, and we trust the lesson will not be lost upon our provincial friends.”

(From the Dublin Evening Post.)

“We refer to a police report, in our fourth page, for an important and well-timed judgment, pronounced by Mr. O’Callaghan, the presiding magistrate in Capel-street Division, which cannot fail to give a decided check to the intolerable nuisance of tract distribution in the streets and public highways. The party charged in this instance for offensive behaviour, in the forcing of publications insulting to the Roman Catholic religion, in a way calculated to lead to a breach of the peace, was ordered to give bail, or, in default, to suffer a certain period of imprisonment.

“The parties employed in this disreputable occupation, appear to have laboured under the delusion that they enjoyed complete impunity, as if there were no means to protect the public from annoyance and interruption whilst engaged in their lawful occupations. The case to which we now refer will convince them of the contrary; and, as there is no chance for martyrdom and its gains in such shabby practices, we doubt not that the decision of the worthy and intelligent magistrate will operate as a salutary preventive in future. It would have been well, perhaps, if some such cooling process had been applied to the recent marauding crusade of the Hundred Scotch Gospelers, who caused so much excitement and some disturbance amongst a peaceable and industrious community.”

(From the Tablet.)

“We think Mr. O’Brien is entitled to the thanks of the Catholic public for his spirited and successful effort to abate the disgusting nuisance of thrusting offensive, often blasphemous, tracts into the hands of persons passing through the public streets. The report of the proceedings,